

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

DLK-79-5

EXC. P. L. #6
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SECRET

Action

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FROM: MOSCOW

TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 2889, MAY 24, 2 PM.

Dept. of State (DLK-79-5)
BY mm NARS, DATE 2/15/79

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I NOTE IN CONVERSATION WITH KOHLER [] HAD INDICATED I FAVORED OUR PROPOSING NEGOTIATIONS ON GERMAN PROBLEM. THIS INEXACT. ALL FOUR WESTERN AMBASSADORS HERE IN AGREEMENT HOWEVER THAT MATTERS SHOULD NOT SIMPLY BE ALLOWED TO DRIFT. WHEN I TOLD ME HE THOUGHT NEGATIVE GERMAN REPLY TO SOVIET MEMORANDUM MIGHT PRECIPITATE SOVIET ACTION ON BERLIN I DISAGREED. WHILE I DO NOT THINK KHRUSHCHEV IS IN ANY REAL DANGER FROM HIS COLLEAGUES, THE ONE ISSUE WHICH MIGHT CAUSE THEM TO ATTEMPT UNSEAT HIM WOULD BE BELIEF HE TAKING ACTION WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO WAR. I DO NOT BELIEVE HE WILL TAKE SUCH RISK BEFORE PARTY CONGRESS. PRESUMABLY AFTER CONGRESS WHICH WILL DOUBTLESS ADD MORE OF HIS SUPPORTERS TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE HE WILL PROBABLY BE IN POSITION TO CARRY OUT ANY POLICY HE DESIRES.

THERE ARE FOUR REASONS WHY I BELIEVE WE SHOULD ATTEMPT DEVELOP BETTER POSITION ON GERMAN PROBLEM. FIRST IS THAT WE SHOULD ENDEAVOR ACHIEVE BETTER POSITION BEFORE WORLD OPINION BOTH IN ORDER TO ATTAIN GREATER UNITY WITH OUR ALLIES AND TO MAKE MORE DIFFICULT DANGEROUS SOVIET ACTION. DESPITE BASIC SOUNDNESS OUR GENEVA PROPOSALS SOVIETS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN CREATING IMPRESSION IN WORLD OPINION THAT WE ARE SAYING NO TO PROPOSAL THAT WOULD AVOID WAR. I BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL THAT WE GET IN POSITION WHERE IT IS SOVIETS WHO ARE SAYING NO. THERE ARE NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES THAT FALL IN THIS CATEGORY AND I BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT DELAY IN WORKING OUT PLANS WITH OUR ALLIES. AMONG POSSIBILITIES OF LARGELY PROPAGANDA CONTENT ARE SUCH STEPS AS INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED REFERENDUM IN WEST BERLIN ON QUESTION WHETHER THEY WANT FREE CITY OR CONTINUANCE PRESENT SITUATION PENDING REUNIFICATION.

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-2- 2889, MAY 24, 2 PM., FROM MOSCOW

SECOND REASON IS THAT WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES AND TO WORLD MAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO SEE IF SOME WAY AROUND PRESENT IMPASSE CAN BE ACHIEVED. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IN SHOWDOWN KHRUSHCHEV MIGHT BE TEMPTED BY MY IDEA OF SOMETHING ALONG LINES OF OUR GENEVA PROPOSALS SPREAD OUT IN TIME PROVIDED THIS WERE COUPLED WITH SOME ACTION ON FRONTIERS SUCH AS UNILATERAL BRITISH AND AMERICAN STATEMENTS SIMILAR TO THAT ALREADY MADE BY DEGAULLE. WE MIGHT STATE THAT IN EVENTUAL PEACE CONFERENCE WE WOULD NOT SUPPORT ANY CHANGE IN FRONTIERS. I REALIZE OF COURSE THIS COULD NOT BE ADVANCED UNTIL AFTER GERMAN ELECTIONS. SUGGEST PACKAGE COULD ALSO INCLUDE BETTER ASSURANCE OF WEST GERMAN ACCESS TO BERLIN.

THIRD REASON IS THAT UNTIL WE IN WEST CAN AGREE ON SOME POSITIVE POSITION IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO HANDLE TACTICAL PROBLEMS WHICH ARE CONSTANTLY ARISING. PRESIDENTS MEETING WITH KHRUSHCHEV IS CASE IN POINT.

FOURTH REASON IS THAT NO QUESTION BUT WHAT SOVIET PRESTIGE AS WELL AS OUR OWN IS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN BERLIN QUESTION. THEREFORE IF WE HOPE ARRIVE AT PEACEFUL SOLUTION SOME FORMULA MUST BE FOUND WHICH WOULD ENABLE BOTH SIDES HAVE FACE. THIS DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE. THIS IS AREA IT SEEMS TO ME PRESIDENT MIGHT MOST USEFULLY EXPLORE WITH K IN PRIVATE STATING FRANKLY WHAT HIS PURPOSE IS.

THERE IS SOME DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AMONG MY COLLEAGUES AND I GATHER IN OUR CAPITALS ABOUT EFFECT OF SEPARATE PEACE TREATY. I PERSONALLY FEEL THIS WILL LEAD TO REALLY MAJOR CRISIS AND THAT WAR WILL HANG IN BALANCE ALTHOUGH THIS IS THE ONE AREA IN WHICH K HAS SOME POSSIBILITY OF BACKING DOWN. I AM INCLINED TO DISAGREE WITH STATEMENT BY FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER AT OSLO.

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THAT PROBLEM WOULD BE ALLIED ACCESS RATHER THAN GERMAN.

THOMPSON

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